



Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
Public Hearing
March 4, 2013

**Testimony of Betsy Crum,
Executive Director, Connecticut Housing Coalition**

Support: Governor's Bill No. 842, which includes:

- **Affordable Housing:** \$136 million in capital funding over the biennium.
- **Public Housing Revitalization:** \$60 million in bonding as years two and three of a ten year commitment of \$300 million to preserve and upgrade this housing.
- **Supportive Housing:** Authorizes \$20 million to develop 100 new units of supportive housing

Members of the Appropriations Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today. My name is Betsy Crum, and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Housing Coalition. The Connecticut Housing Coalition represents the broad, vibrant network of community-based affordable housing activity across the state. Our more than 250 member organizations include nonprofit developers, human service agencies, resident associations, and diverse other housing practitioners and advocates. Founded in 1981, the Coalition works to expand housing opportunity and to increase the quantity and quality of affordable housing in Connecticut.

Our Coalition strongly supports Governor's Bill 842, AN ACT AUTHORIZING AND ADJUSTING BONDS OF THE STATE FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS, TRANSPORTATION AND OTHER PURPOSES, which includes significant new resources for housing and other essential investments in Connecticut's future. Specifically, these include:

- **Affordable Housing.** Authorizes \$136 million in capital funding over the biennium (\$68 million in each year) to develop or rehabilitate affordable housing across the state and increase the affordable housing options for workers, young professionals, and low-income families.
- **Public Housing Revitalization.** Authorizes \$60 million in bonding (\$30 million in each year) as years two and three of a ten year commitment of \$300 million to preserve and upgrade this housing, bringing deteriorated and vacant units back on line (appropriations have been requested to annualize 300 new RAPs to ensure an adequate ongoing revenue stream to prevent future deterioration)
- **Supportive Housing.** Authorizes \$20 million to develop 100 new units of supportive housing (appropriations have been requested to annualize \$1 million for rental assistance subsidies and \$1 million for services).



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- Incentive Housing Zones. There is also funding for Incentive Housing Zones, which authorizes \$1 million for financial incentive payments to help municipalities plan for and create mixed-income housing that is critical to attracting and retaining young professionals, working families, retirees, and people in public service jobs. It will help to create more affordable housing opportunities, and we will be supporting it for HOME-CT.

There are so many good reasons to support this investment. At the Connecticut Housing Coalition, we hear every day from families who need housing, and understand the critical role it plays in creating a healthy, sustainable state. I would like to highlight just a few facts:

- On average in Connecticut, a full-time worker needs to earn \$23.58/hour to afford a modest 2-bedroom apartment. More than half (50%) of all jobs pay less than this on an hourly basis.
- An estimated two-thirds (66%) of all renters in Connecticut are unable to afford the typical apartment.
- Housing is now the #1 subject of all calls for help to Infoline/211.
- Over the next ten years, it is estimated that the Governor's plan will create more than 6,700 construction industry and related jobs.

Across the state, there is housing waiting to be revitalized and built. In 2006 the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority identified 278 properties in the state housing portfolio that required some level of modernization or renovation; that number has only grown since then. Our community development industry in Connecticut, which is comprised of nonprofits that are rooted in their cities and towns, stands ready to construct and rehabilitate housing that is high quality, small scale, well-managed and responsive to local needs and conditions. Every year, dozens of high quality affordable housing proposals go unfunded due to lack of resources.

The Governor's plan to make a sustained and significant investment in revitalizing our current stock of state-financed affordable housing and create new affordable housing for families and senior citizens signals his great commitment to the health, prosperity and sustainability of our state and to the well-being of all of the citizens within our state. I urge you to support this important bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments/

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Crum
Executive Director